



# THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

County of Los Angeles

## MINUTES

Meeting Place: Charles W. Eliot Arts Magnet Academy  
Carl D. Roeder Auditorium, 2184 North Lake Avenue  
Altadena, California 91001

Meeting Date: July 28, 2016 - Thursday

Time: 6:00 p.m.

---

### Present:

Commissioners Smith, Louie, Pedersen, Modugno

Absent: Commissioner Shell

### Ex Officio Members:

Director of Public Works: Mr. Matthew Dubiel, Senior Civil Engineer

County Counsel: Ms. Jill Jones, Deputy

Planning Director: Mr. Mark Child, Deputy Director, Advance Planning Division

Forester and Fire Warden: Absent

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Modugno representing the Fifth Supervisorial District.

### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

2. Motion/second by Commissioners Modugno/Pedersen – That the agenda for July 28, 2016 be approved.

At the direction of the Vice Chair, the agenda was approved with Commissioners Modugno, Pedersen, Smith and Louie in favor and Commissioner Shell being recorded as absent.

### COUNTY COUNSEL REPORT

3. There were no reports given by County Counsel.

07/28/16

DIRECTOR/DEPUTY DIRECTOR

4. There were no reports given by Director/Deputy Director.

PUBLIC HEARING

Community Studies - North Section

Action Taken as Noted

5. **Project No. R2016-000348-(5). Altadena Community Standards District Update. Altadena, Northeast Pasadena and Mount Gleason Zoned Districts. a. Advance Planning No. 2016000640. To consider a comprehensive update to the Altadena Community Standards District for the unincorporated community of Altadena, this includes amendments to uses and development standards for residential and commercial zones, and other community-wide amendments. b. Environmental Assessment No. 2016002556. To consider a Negative Declaration as it has been determined that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment pursuant to CEQA reporting requirements.**

Mr. McDonald and Mr. Marshalian provided the Commission with an update to the Altadena CSD which is a part of Title 22, the County of Los Angeles Zoning Code. The CSD Update in Section 2 of the Ordinance will revise uses and development standards for residential and commercial areas to maintain the diverse, eclectic and unique character of Altadena, and encourage town/district centers with thriving businesses and pedestrian oriented development. The intent of the update is to provide more opportunities for home based occupations, address heights of fences and walls in front yards, provide more consistency for front yard setbacks, create a pedestrian friendly building design and community consistency for commercial uses and signage, and make businesses on undersized lots more viable while protecting and enhancing the residential nature of the surrounding community.

The CSD modification process is being streamlined to be consistent with how discretionary projects are processed through the Minor Conditional Use Permit. Sections 3 through 10 of the Ordinance are specific to Altadena. These are countywide ordinance amendments that will provide consistency for discretionary projects for Hearing Officer cases and for the Minor Conditional Use Permits. The CSD update will promote more businesses in Altadena, improve pedestrian oriented design of commercial areas and reduce costs and uncertainty for applicants.

The Altadena Community Standards District (CSD) is a supplemental district of zoning regulations to ensure that new and expanded structures and uses are compatible in size and scale with the surrounding neighborhoods within the unincorporated community of Altadena with a Vision Plan to set the direction for any future updates to the CSD.

07/28/16

PUBLIC HEARING (Cont.)

Community Studies - North Section

The existing Altadena CSD was established in 1998, and is based on the 1986 Altadena Community Plan. The current update to the Altadena CSD is in progress in collaboration with the Altadena CSD Committee, a subcommittee of the Altadena Town Council.

Mr. Marshalian stated that the following categories were amended to include themes for the Altadena CSD on Diversity, Vitality, Flexibility, Design and Balance for: Bed and Breakfast Establishments (B&Bs), Home Based-Occupations, Fences, Walls and Hedges in Front Yard in R-1 Zones, Setbacks, Commercial, Drive Through, Outdoor Dining, Auto Service, Other Use Amendments, Consistent Commercial Development Standards, Additional Pedestrian-Friendly Development Standards, Parking, CSD Modification Process, Consistency with Countywide Ordinances, and Plan Consistency.

Mr. Jim Osterling, of Altadena Committee described the process to the Regional Planning Commission on the visioning and objectives for the CSD. He indicated that the CSD will: 1) continue current standards for air, light and privacy with no anti-mansionization; 2) preserve the diverse, eclectic and unique character of Altadena neighborhoods; 3) make the permitting process less expensive and cumbersome; 4) create a process to allow certain non-conforming uses; 5) maintain traffic and pedestrian safety; and 6) allow low impact home based businesses; and fix certain errors in the current CSD.

Furthermore, Mr. Osterling, suggested 4 additional recommendations which included: 1) 2<sup>nd</sup> units; 2) odd shaped lots with small street frontage; 3) small additions under 500 feet; and 4) parking requirements for very small commercial lots, which staff took under submission.

Lastly, Mr. Osterling stated that the approved controversial "Charles & Company" building at Lake Avenue and Calaveras also known as (aka) the Fortress is an example why the community should support the CSD revision which includes restrictions for future developments to address community concerns.

Testimony was followed from 44 members of the community voicing their concerns that: 1) The fences, walls and hedges both inside and outside of required yards should remain oversized as an aspect of the community character, for privacy and noise concerns; 2) Vacation Home Rentals (VHR) falling under the umbrella of a "Bed & Breakfast", currently there is a property serving as a VHR and creating increased noise, street congestion; 3) The entrances and windows on commercial developments facing the street should have views; 4) The continued "Charles & Company" construction on Lake Avenue and Calaveras, aka the (Fortress) even with stop orders, the Department of Regional Planning fails to enforce current standards; and 5) The CSD modification process for Development Standards, not more than two written protests are received.

07/28/16

PUBLIC HEARING (Cont.)

Community Studies - North Section

Discussion was followed between staff and Commissioners in which the Vice Chair, Doug Smith asked staff to provide the clarification on the process of the approved Charles & Company shopping center aka (Fortress) and its stop order holds and what is a Minor Conditional Use Permit.

Mr. Child, Deputy Director, Advance Planning described the following: 1) Minor Conditional Use Permit - Are required for very specific uses called out in the code (22.56.085) and they are considered discretionary, and require a public hearing. The Department sends out notices to property owners within 300 feet of the site. If the Department receives at least two protests, the case would be heard by the Hearing Officer with the decision being appealable to the RPC; and

2) In 2012, the commercial building was approved through a ministerial Site Plan Review Case No. RPP201001343. On March 17, 2015, changes to the commercial building were approved through ministerial Site Plan Review Case No. RPP201500177. On December 17, 2015, additional changes to the commercial building were approved through an amendment to make the exterior appearance of the commercial building more aesthetically appealing in response to comments from community members, including input from the Altadena Town Council members. On June 2, 2016, additional changes to the commercial building were approved through an amendment to address discrepancies between the approved plans and the building under construction that were found during a site inspection that triggered a revocation of the Department approval; and on July 18, 2016, related signage was approved through ministerial Site Plan Review Case No. RPPL2016001738.

The current Community Standard District (CSD) requirements applicable to the project require that at least 50% of the total width of the building's ground floor facing Lake Avenue be devoted to entrances, show windows, or other displays which are of interest to pedestrians, and it requires clear or lightly tinted glass to be used for windows on this frontage.

On the approved building plans, including the most recent approval, the total width of the entrance, windows, display cases and vine-covered trellises slightly exceeded 50% for the total width of the Lake avenue frontage. The current language in the CSD does not clearly define what may be counted as a display of interest to pedestrians, but the display cases and vine-covered trellises were counted because they will serve to break up the building facade and are intended to provide displays of visual interest to pedestrians.

The project does not meet some of the standards contained in the draft revisions to the CSD. The draft CSD requirements state that at least 55% of the total length of the

07/28/16

PUBLIC HEARING (Cont.)

Community Studies - North Section

facade and 40% of the total area of the façade of the ground floor shall be devoted to windows, interior views, or interior displays visible to pedestrians. Windows must offer views of the store interior and be placed at a maximum of four feet in height, as measured from the sidewalk, if they are provided to meet these requirements. If there is no primary entrance on the façade facing the commercial corridor, then at least 75% of the total width and 60% of the total façade area of the ground floors shall be windows, interior views, or interior displays visible to pedestrians. The draft revised CSD also has a requirement for buildings to be set back at least two feet from the ultimate road right-of-way.

Motion/second by Commissioners Modugno/Louie – That the item be continued to Wednesday, September 14, 2016 to be heard at Department of Regional Planning headquarters, 320 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012 and to provide remote testimony at a location nearby for community members to attend. Furthermore, for staff to return with a response to concerns raised from the community as described above with tighten language and clarification.

At the direction of the Vice Chair, the item was continued to Wednesday, September 14, 2016.

PUBLIC COMMENT

**6. Public comment pursuant to Section 54954.3 of the Government Code.**

Testimony was heard from 4 community members voicing their concerns under public comment: 1) Ms. Brenda Wright voiced her concerns on nuisance abatement team having excessive force when they came to her home; 2) Ms. Antoinette Perry voiced her concerns regarding the current hedges being a certain height, she indicated that she has a yard full of vegetables which require little water because of the amount of shade protecting her garden; 3) Mr. Adrian Rabbani expressed his concerns that the Department was not in procedural compliance for not allowing public input; and 4) Ms. Gloria Roberts raised concern regarding future setbacks requirements of 2 feet for front yard set-backs.

07/28/16

CONTINUATION OF REPORTS

7. **Possible Call for Review of Decisions by Hearing Officer, pursuant to Section 22.60.200 of the Los Angeles County Code.**

There were no items Called up for Review by the Commission.

8. **Commission/Counsel/Director Reports**

There were no reports given by Commission/Counsel/Director.

ADJOURNMENT


A recording of the testimony received and the discussions held at this meeting and a copy of all findings and resolutions acted upon by the Commission are on file in the Department of Regional Planning.

The Commission adjourned at 9:25 p.m. to Wednesday, August 3, 2016.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Rosie O. Ruiz, Commission Secretary

ATTEST

APPROVE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Doug Smith, Vice Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Child, Deputy Director  
Advance Planning Division